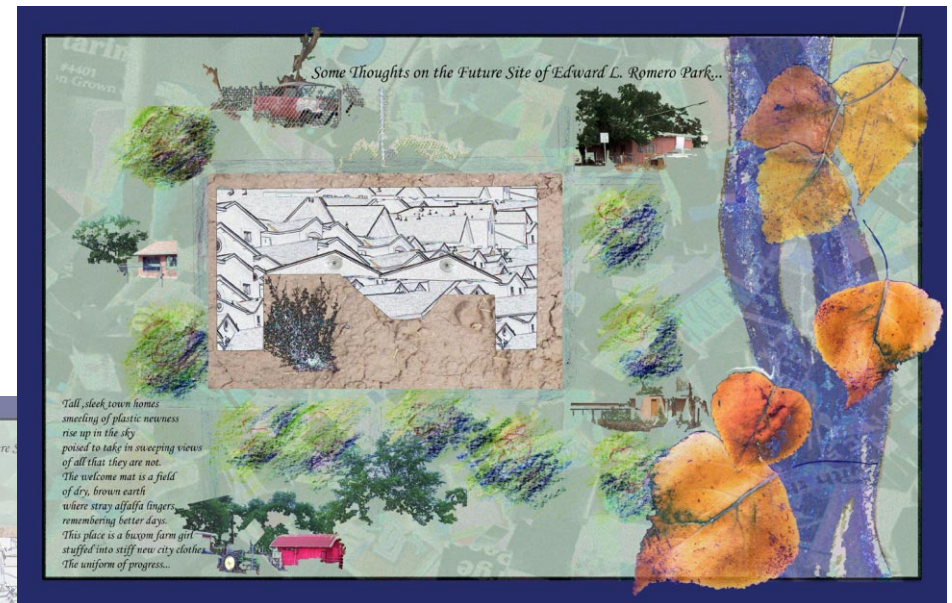


AMBASSADOR EDWARD L. ROMERO PARK



Prepared by LA 505 / The Comprehensive Studio
School of Architecture and Planning
Landscape Architecture Program
University of New Mexico
For Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation
Albuquerque, New Mexico

April 26, 2004



Cover poetry

Tall, sleek town homes
smelling of plastic newness
rise up in the sky
poised to take in sweeping views
of all that they are not.
The welcome mat is a field
of dry, brown earth
where stray alfalfa lingers
remembering better days.
This place is a buxom farm girl
stuffed into stiff new city clothes.
The uniform of progress...

Mitzi Messick

Dedication

This final report is dedicated to the communities of Poco Loco and Westbrook Commons. Our wish for you is that the Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park will enhance the quality of your lives. Our hope for you is that this park becomes the foundation for establishing your new community.

Acknowledgements

Ambasador Edward L. Romero
Harold Albert, Rio Bravo Ventures LLC
Senator Manny Aragon, District 14

Bernalillo County Commission

Alan B. Armijo, Chair, District 1
E. Tim Cummins, District Vice-Chair
Steve D. Gallegos, Member, District 2
Tom Rutherford, Chair, District 3
Michael Brasher, Member, District 5
Juan R. Vigil, Former County Manager
Thaddeus Lucero, County Manager
Julie M. Baca, Community Services Director

Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department

Joanne Caffrey, Director
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Marty Candelaria, Parks Area Supervisor
Art Contreras, Assistant Parks Area Supervisor

Residents of Poco Loco, Westbrook Commons, and the Mountainview Neighborhood Association

UNM, School of Architecture and Planning, Landscape Architecture Program, LA 505: The Comprehensive Studio

Joni M. Palmer, Visiting Assistant Professor
Lisa Barva
Katya Crawford
Suze Greene
Ethan Kane
Mitzi Messick
Jay Rice
Yvette Tovar

Thank you to all of the students for assisting in the creation of this report. Many thanks to Jay Rice for helping us get this report started after the studio was completed. And, a special thanks to Yvette Tovar for all of her hard work during the winter break and during the spring semester -- your assistance was critical to the success of this final report!

Visiting Critics

Rob Layton, Principal, Design Concepts
Robb Berg, Davis Partnership
Lynn Paxson, ISU, Assoc. Professor
Ann Komara, CU/D, Assistant Professor

Guest Critics

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Executive Summary

The Project and The Players

This project was an initial attempt to develop a partnership between the University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning Program in Landscape Architecture and the Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department.

We were most fortunate to have a SAAP/CRP alumnus to work with us: providing us with essential historical information, site information, and community and professional contacts; as well, Clay Campbell guided us through the Parks and Recreation Planning process, and he was an integral part of all steps of the studio process. Clay Campbell was also the liaison between the UNM studio and the many groups and individuals with vested interests in this park.

The other players--these many groups and individuals--ranged from the community members and neighborhood associations of Poco Loco, Westbrook Commons and Mountainview, to local design and planning professionals, Bernalillo County staff, and numerous other interested and passionate citizens and professionals.

Lest we forget the students, as we list the many people who contributed to this project; these 7 students were engaged in a complex community and county process that challenged them to further develop

communication, organization, planning and design skills.

This project truly was a collaborative endeavor; without all participating members we could never have produced the design schemes we offer to you in this report.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Studio...

The Comprehensive Design Studio is intended to provide students with a project that challenges the skills, passions, and intellectual inquiry they have developed thus far in the program. This studio is the culmination of the graduate studio work, and the studio objectives were followed as prescribed by the Program Director:

- 1) To develop an understanding of a professional process for landscape architecture practice.
- 2) To integrate and consolidate social, cultural, environmental and technological knowledge, and to synthesize principles for making places.
- 3) To understand, to articulate, and to express those values that each student believes to be important, and to search for themes in your work that reflect your perceived role as a designer of environments.

In addition, the specific objectives for this particular project:

- 1) To further develop students' skills in the following areas, continually exploring and testing new methods and techniques:

- Visualization and Representation
- Community Process
- Client Relations
- Research and Reports
 - [writing and packaging]
- Presentations
- Site Analysis
- Site Planning and Design
- Design Development
- Detail Design
- Construction Documents

- 2) To build confidence in the design and planning abilities the students have gained thus far in the program, through active participation in the project process: decision-making, team work, and individual initiatives toward realizing completion of the project.

- 3) To develop a work ethic and design process/skills that will help the students to excel in the professional world.

Historical Context of Site and Project

by Clay Campbell

Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park is approximately 4 acres in size. It was donated to Bernalillo County in August 2003 by developer Harold Albert of Rio Bravo Commons LLC, who secured a Special Use Permit for Planned Development Area (CSU-99-10) from the Bernalillo County Extraterritorial Land Use Authority in 2000. The park is named after Edward L. Romero who was former Ambassador to Spain and Andorra under the Clinton Administration, co-founder of the National Hispanic Cultural Center, and a founding member of the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce.

Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department (BCPR) is managing design and development of site and will be responsible for park maintenance after completion. Bernalillo County received \$100,000 from the 2003 New Mexico State Legislature, sponsored by Senator Manny Aragon, for site design and Phase 1 development. An additional \$30,000 from park impact fees collected from the Westbrook Commons Subdivision will be used for Phase 1 development. This \$130,000 will not be enough for complete park development. Additional project funds will be pursued from future legislative sessions and other sources.

This park is needed to improve level of recreational service in the South Valley, where neighborhood parks are generally lacking, particularly east of the river. It's development is noted as a high priority in the recently adopted Bernalillo County Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan.

Water for this site is expected to come from the City of Albuquerque. Initial park development will likely use municipal water that serves homes in the subdivision. The City is currently designing the Southside Water Reclamation Plant Reuse Project that will use treated effluent, which is ideal for irrigation, from the Treatment Plant on Second Street for a variety of public facilities in the southeastern quadrant of the City. This park will be the first County facility entirely irrigated with treated effluent and holds promise to be a model of sustainable and quality design.

Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department Senior Park Planner Clay Campbell approached UNM Landscape Architecture Program Director Alf Simon in early summer 2003 with the idea of having an advanced design studio prepare the preliminary designs for this park. This arrangement would give students valuable experience while allowing the County to stretch its dollars further, begin the public involvement process, and add value to the project. The County and the LA Program

agreed in August 2003 to work together. The advanced studio for graduate students' final design course, LA 505, was given a budget of \$2,500 to complete their work.

Under the guidance of Assistant Professor Professor Joni M. Palmer, seven graduate students in the LA 505 course have prepared three (3) preliminary designs for this park to fulfill their course requirements during the fall 2003. Preliminary designs include park program, an irrigation plan, and an overall master plan/site plan for phased development. Students based their designs on Bernalillo County wishes and public input obtained in fall 2003. They provided valuable creative energy and engaged the community to determine the park program while receiving valuable experience working on a real project as part of their degree requirements. They added tremendous value to the project and brought enthusiasm and vigor to the design process.

In Spring 2004, Bernalillo County will hire a registered civil engineer to develop a utility plan and a registered landscape architect to prepare construction drawings. This work will be based on the students' designs and the input received in fall 2003. It is expected that the best elements from each preliminary design will be incorporated into a refined and composite design by fall 2004.

Phase 1 construction is expected to begin in 2005. The contents of Phase 1 will be determined by how much additional funding is obtained from the legislature and other sources in 2004.

History and Profile of BCPR

In 1973, the County Commission funded a separate Parks and Recreation Department. The goals of the BCPR Department were to address the increased demand for leisure and recreational services and to improve the quality of recreational services to County residents living outside the City of Albuquerque municipal limits. Since 1973, BCPR Department has grown to include dozens of diverse facilities and services. The Department now manages:

- * Seven multi-purpose community centers that are adjacent to other park facilities that create multi-functional community complexes,
- * Four swimming pools,
- * Nearly forty community and neighborhood parks,
- * Sixty-six athletic fields and numerous tennis and basketball courts,
- * Seven specialty facilities emphasizing equestrian, hang gliding, polo, BMX, or performing arts,
- * 1,000 acres of public Open Space,
- * Programs and special events benefiting youth, teens, seniors and the community at large.

The Department is divided into five sections, with each having diverse programs and facilities:

1) Special Programs

The award-winning Dance, Dance, Dance "It's A Teen Thing" program and special events, Anti-Graffiti Program, Bernalillo County Family Literacy Program, four Community Pride Events (one in each Commission District except District 3), and the Bernalillo County/Intel Computer Clubhouse.

2) Community Fitness

- a. Sports: Adult basketball, youth basketball, adult softball, co-ed adult sand volleyball, wrestling programs and tournaments.
- b. Aquatics: Recreational swimming, swimming lessons, lap swimming, swim team, water aerobics and water safety instruction certification.
- c. Fitness Centers: Atrium Fitness Center, RioGrande Fitness Center, Westside Fitness Center and Los Padillas Fitness Center.

3) Community Centers

Preschool recreation (Parky's Pals), before and after school and intersession recreation, summer recreation for youth, adult enrichment, arts and crafts, adult literacy, General Equivalency Diploma (GED), fitness, programs for adults and seniors, martial arts, recreational sports, senior meal sites, music and dance, and community meeting space.

4) Youth and Senior Services

Senior programs, meal sites at seven locations, special events and field trips, summer youth recreation, summer lunch program, before and after school programs and the Middle School Initiative.

5) Land Management

Park, Open Space and playground maintenance, trail and median landscaping maintenance, special event preparations, planning and construction project management.

More information about BCPR and its facilities and programs can be found at www.bernco.gov/departments/parks&recreation/

Overview of the Studio Process

by Joni M Palmer

The Academic Year at UNM began August 25th, 2003. The class was presented with the following, in their course syllabus: The LA 505 studio is meant to be comprehensive both in the breadth of its subject matter as well as in the scope of the design effort. Landscape architects in a broad range of practice, private and public, produce master plans for projects of a wide variety of scales, from regional to individual parcels; whatever their scale, they typically involve a process of site inventory, programming for activities and facilities, analysis of opportunities/constraints, conceptual design exploration, site planning, and recommendations for project implementation. The studio will reflect a professional office/studio atmosphere and approach; I will be acting as a guide/mentor, as per the role of a project principal in an office.

With this basic direction of the course established we set forth on a 16 week journey that involved the following phases of work:

1. CLIENT AND PROGRAM
meeting with ClayCampbell, Senior Park Planner, to understand the site(First Impressions), the history of the subdivision development, and the park program;

2. SYSTEMS AND PATTERNS
understanding the site in terms of macro and micro scales and forces, as well as understanding the history of the neighborhood and the unique conditions of the South Valley;
3. COMMUNITY PROCESS
developing and implementing a community process;
4. SITE ANALYSIS AND PROGRAMMING
"Taking Measure" : becoming intimate with the site conditions, issues, and opportunities, as well as developing a program that responded to the Parks and Recreation objectives and the community wants and needs;
5. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN
generating design ideas--being mindful of the Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department goals, attentive to community desires, and responding to various professional disciplines advice;
6. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND DETAIL DESIGN
developing conceptual design schemes--as 3 teams;

7. PRESENTATIONS
presenting ideas to the community, the Parks and Recreation Department, and local professionals--in order to receive feedback to refine design ideas;
8. CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS
producing construction documents;
9. FINAL REPORT
composing a final report for community members to consider and respond to, and to be used by the Parks and Recreation staff to further the realization of the Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park.

The face of the water, in time, became a wonderful book—a book that was a dead language to the uneducated passenger, but which told its mind to me without reserve, delivering its most cherished secrets as clearly as if it uttered them with a voice. And it was not a book to be read once and thrown aside, for it had a new story to tell every day.
Mark Twain, Life on the Mississippi
from THE LANGUAGE OF LANDSCAPE.
Anne Whiston Spirn

I do not argue that we should abandon our love of the aesthetic object, the beautiful, the poetic, or even the visual. I argue only that we should balance our fascination with the world of appearances by remembering that architecture is an ecological, technological, and political practice.
Steven A. Moore, TECHNOLOGY AND PLACE.

Introduction

The Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park is a parcel of approximately five acres located within the new Westbrook Commons subdivision in the South Valley. The donation of the land to Bernalillo County by the developer has created an opportunity to develop an amenity for the new subdivision and the surrounding communities. The preliminary designs for the park are the product of a collaboration between Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation (BCPR) and the Landscape Architecture program at the University of New Mexico (UNM). Clay Campbell, Senior Planner for BCPR, is overseeing the Romero Park project. Studio 505, a graduate level studio at the UNM, has produced the alternative designs for the park. This document is a record of the work accomplished by Studio 505.



The Rio Grande and South Valley



The proximity of site to the river



The subdivision and park site



Riparian Corridor west

The prospective park site is located in Westbrook Commons, a new subdivision in the South Valley of Albuquerque. The site is situated less than a quarter mile east of the Rio Grande, and less than a quarter mile north of Rio Bravo Boulevard. The north side of the site abuts Poco Loco, a quasi-rural subdivision settled in the 1940s. The south, east and west sides of the site are bounded by the backyard wooden fences of Westbrook Commons. Most of the homes bordering the park are two-story. The style and building material are typical of subdivisions throughout the United States and do not necessarily represent the South Valley or the region. There are a total of 76 homes in Westbrook Commons. The larger context of the South Valley is predominantly residential and agricultural on the west side of the river and predominantly agricultural and industrial on the east side of the river.



Typical architectural style of subdivision



Rural nature of Poco Loco neighborhood



Drainage easement in subdivision



Panoramic view of the site, looking south

Prior to the development of Westbrook Commons, the site was part of an alfalfa field. The field also served as an ephemeral wildlife habitat due to both the agriculture and the proximity to the river corridor. The development of the subdivision brought about several changes to the site. Vegetation and topsoil were removed from the site. Rough grading of the site created a gentle slope roughly northeast to southwest. A retention pond constructed in the southeast corner of the site manages all

runoff from the subdivision. Volunteer species of trees and perennials are growing intermittently around the site.

The process used to develop the preliminary designs for Romero Park involved four integral stages: contextual analysis, community relations, site analysis and design development. Students performed contextual analysis as a means of understanding the framework of the surrounding South Valley.

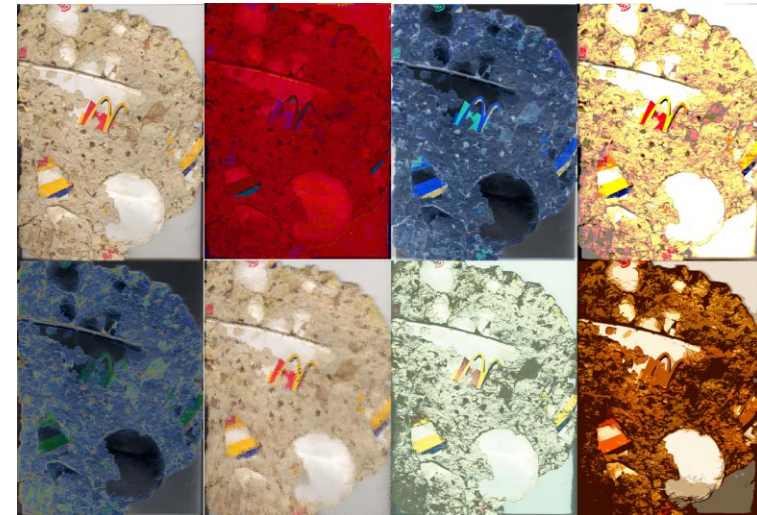
Patterns of land shape, land use, infrastructure and cultural context were examined.

Community relations were developed through a series of meetings with members of the approximate neighborhoods. Each student closely examined one aspect of the site and contributed the findings to create a comprehensive site analysis. The studio was then divided into three teams, each of which developed a proposal for the park design.

First Impressions



Clockwise:
Lisa Barva
Ethan Kane
Yvette Tovar



Community Process

OVERVIEW

Many residents of the Poco Loco neighborhood were not happy with the transformation of an open field to the dense development of the subdivision. Some of the concerns have been the removal of wildlife habitat, the increase of traffic along the once quiet street of Rossmoor and the concern that residents now in the subdivision will live there short-term and rent out the houses. Although the neighborhoods exist, the concept of community is still in the making. Other than Westbrook Commons, there is only one other subdivision on the east side of the river, which is located within a couple of miles south of the park site. This neighborhood, Mountain View, is older and more established. Mountain View has an active neighborhood association and an impressive community center.

FIRST MEETING: COMMUNITY GATHERING AND GREETING

We began our community process by holding an informal gathering at the site. The gathering was advertised by posting fliers on doors and bulletin boards throughout the neighborhoods. The intention of this first meeting was to introduce ourselves as UNM graduate landscape architecture students working with Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation on the park design.



Parky the squirrel greeting the youngest resident at the first meeting

More importantly, we wanted the chance to meet and find out about the residents of these two neighborhoods and give them a chance to get to know each other as well.



Clay Campbell with Bernalillo Parks and Recreation explaining park project to residents

About ten people showed up to this meeting. Although a small gathering, important information was gathered and a core group was established that continued to attend the future meetings. From this gathering we learned that many of the residents of the Westbrook Commons were originally from the South Valley, and that many of them are first time homebuyers with children. From the Poco Loco neighborhood we learned that the site was not only an alfalfa field, but a popular stop-over spot for migratory birds, primarily the Sandhill Cranes and snow geese.

SECOND MEETING: PARK PROGRAMMING

The same number of people showed up to the second meeting, which was held at the Mountain View Community Center. This two-part meeting, lasting an hour and a half, was geared towards the park programming. In the first part we began by engaging the community members in activities of cognitive mapping, and asked for descriptions of things each of them like to do and the context of the South Valley. We also wanted to get a better idea of what natural and built elements were important to them. Interesting findings came from the maps. For example, not one person drew the Rio Grande on their personal map, even though the river is less than half a mile away from the neighborhoods and is an integral part of the history and life of the South Valley. We learned that people had great expectations for the park and that is what they focused on.



A family from Westbrook Commons participating in the cognitive mapping exercise.



Lisa (grad student) helping resident from Mountain View in the park programming exercise.

The next part of the meeting was gathering information about park programming. We began by asking the participants a series of questions about the park. Questions included: 1) How do you envision yourself in/using the park? 2) What types of amenities would you like to see in the park? 3) What are your concerns/fears about the park? 4) How would you like to envision the park in five or ten years? 5) What don't you want to see (or see happening) in the park? Participants wrote their answers (no limit per person) on 3X5 cards that were then placed within each question category on the wall and further discussed.



Cognitive mapping exercise

From this section of the meeting we were able to gain community programming needs, hopes and concerns for the park that would then directly inform our designs.

THIRD MEETING: PRELIMINARY DESIGNS

The third meeting, also at the Mountain View Community Center, gave the neighborhood members an opportunity to respond to our preliminary designs. Each of the three design teams met with members of the community and were able to have rich and thorough conversations centered



Mitzi discussing preliminary concept design



Jay and Katya discussing design with residents

around the conceptual and programmatic designs. Participants were very forward and articulate in sharing their ideas (in both verbal and written format) about what they liked and disliked (and why), as well as their concerns and hopes for the park. Upon leaving, each person was asked to fill out a questionnaire about what they felt was successful or not successful about each design.

Teams reviewed this gathering of information the next week in class and proceeded to refine and develop the designs to further respond to the communities concerns and requests.

FOURTH MEETING: FINAL PRESENTATIONS

This meeting, also held at the Mountain View Community Center, was the presentation of the three team's final designs for the park site. There was one new face at the meeting, but all the other attendees were the core community members who had attended previous meetings. We began by having each team present their park design. After these brief presentations attendees were encouraged to ask questions or make comments to each of the design teams. There were still some concerns about each design (having a picnic area too close to a Westbrook resident's back yard, having cactus in the park, having access to the park from backyards etc.) but overall, attendees were very impressed with the amount of work and time that went into each design. Similar to the third meeting, attendees were asked to fill out questionnaires asking which design they liked the best and why. From these comment sheets we were able to identify where we had succeeded in



Ethan and Suze discussing design concept with residents

fulfilling community requests and where some issues were still in question. Additionally, from the individual questions asked, we were able to assess when we were effective in our verbal and graphic presentations and when we were not. The biggest questions were "Which design will get picked?" and "When will it start and be finished?"



Community members reviewing Scheme 2

CONCLUSION

What was interesting about this community process is that we really had to start from the ground up. Without the presence of a formal community organization to work with we realized that our primary goals would be to establish trust, generate neighborhood interest in the project, and to draw them to the community meetings. The small group of residents who consistently attended the meetings were articulate about their needs, hopes and concerns for the park and the community. Perhaps the greatest accomplishment from this process is that the two separate neighborhoods of Westbrook Commons and Poco Loco have begun the process of becoming a community.

Final Presentations



Scheme 1: Yvette Tovar, Mitzi Messick, Lisa Barva



Scheme 2: Ethan Kane, Suze Greene



Scheme 3: Jay Rice, Katya Crawford

Pattern Mapping

Contours

- 0 - 100' elevation gain
- 101 - 200' elevation gain
- 201 - 300' elevation gain
- 301 - 400' elevation gain

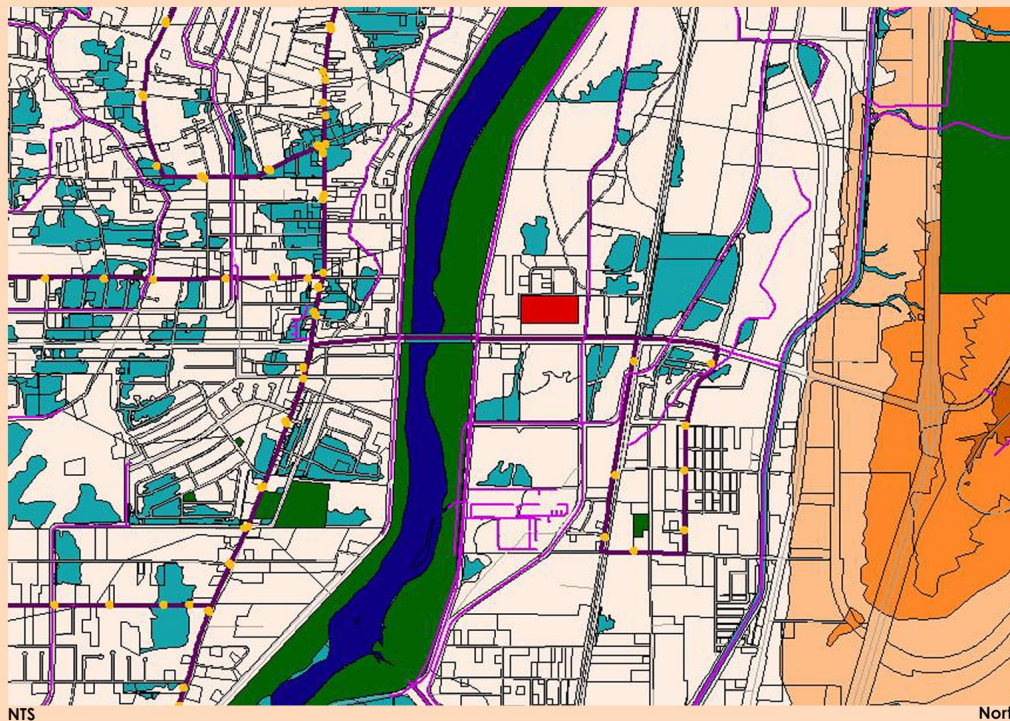
The following map examples show a variety of that design and planning professionals often when proposing changes to a site. Although included in these maps are manmade (e.g., relationships between those elements and (e.g. contour lines) may help a designer are not only site-specific but also mindful influences that impact a project. It is puzzle together after looking at the Designing well-conceived projects is meaningful when you have a picture begin putting the pieces together.

informational patterns take into consideration many of the systems bus routes, homes, etc.), existing natural features make suggestions that of the larger contextual much easier to put a picture on the box cover, considerably more of the whole before you

NTS

North

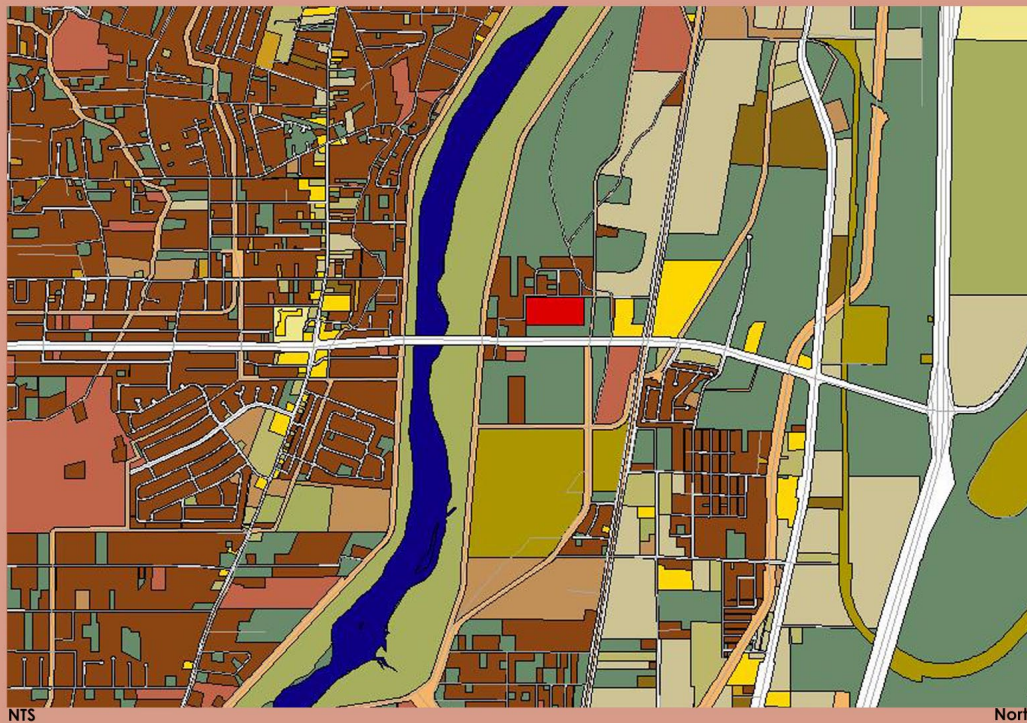
Systems



- Rio Grande
- Parks and Recreation
- Floodzone
- Westbrook development
- Bus stop
- Stormwater and/or acequia
- Bus route
- Contour line 50
- Contour line 51 - 52
- Contour line 53 - 54

Natural patterns have been overlaid by manmade systems in this map to help illustrate opportunities for better links to services and amenities. For example, the city bus travels along Rio Bravo Blvd. very near our site, but there is no busstop. Also, developers who apply for building permits may have difficulty receiving approval if their site is in the floodzone and utilities are not preexisting. Maps can help identify potential problems and make the work of designers and planners more efficient. (Yes, a bus stop near our site is on the way.)

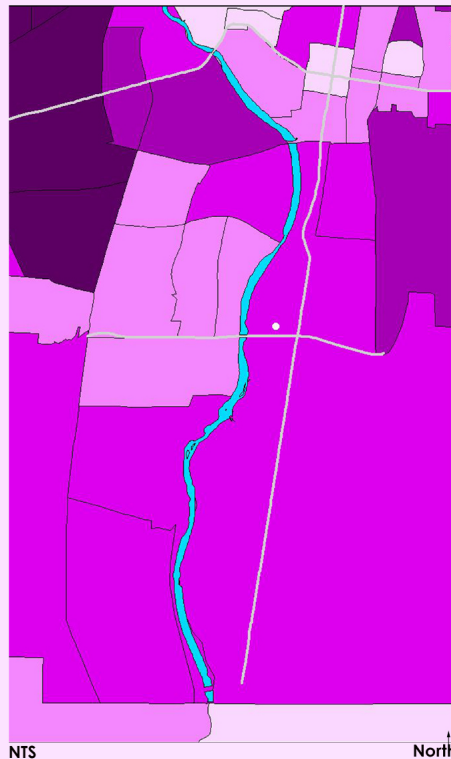
Land Use



- Rio Grande
- County Parks and Recreation locations
- Westbrook development
- Single and multi-family housing
- Commercial
- Vacant/other
- Industrial
- Utilities
- Agricultural
- Other
- Public and institutional
- Drainage and flood control

Steeped in agricultural tradition, the South Valley's land use footprint is undergoing rapid change. In response to an expanding population base residential, industrial, and other land use needs other than agriculture change. Land use maps can be useful to designers and planners in establishing, for example, links between public facilities and habitat appropriate for wildlife corridors.

Demographics



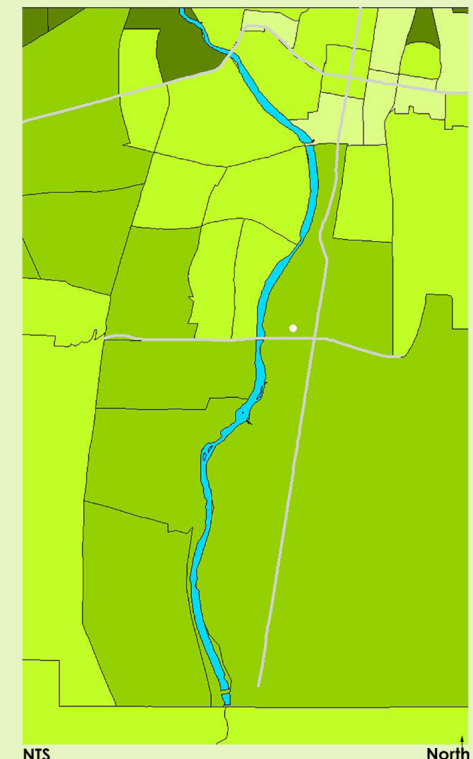
Population

- 0 - 2000
- 2001 - 4000
- 4001 - 6000
- 6001 - 8000
- 8001 - 9005
- Site

Demographic statistics such as population densities and household income levels help designers and planners learn more about the targeted communities for whom projects are developed. While the ranges used for these maps are relatively broad, contrasts with surrounding areas may help project professionals ask more specific questions about the site. For example, if income levels are low and there is a majority of retired persons in this neighborhood, how could services and amenities be provided to better serve that demographic?

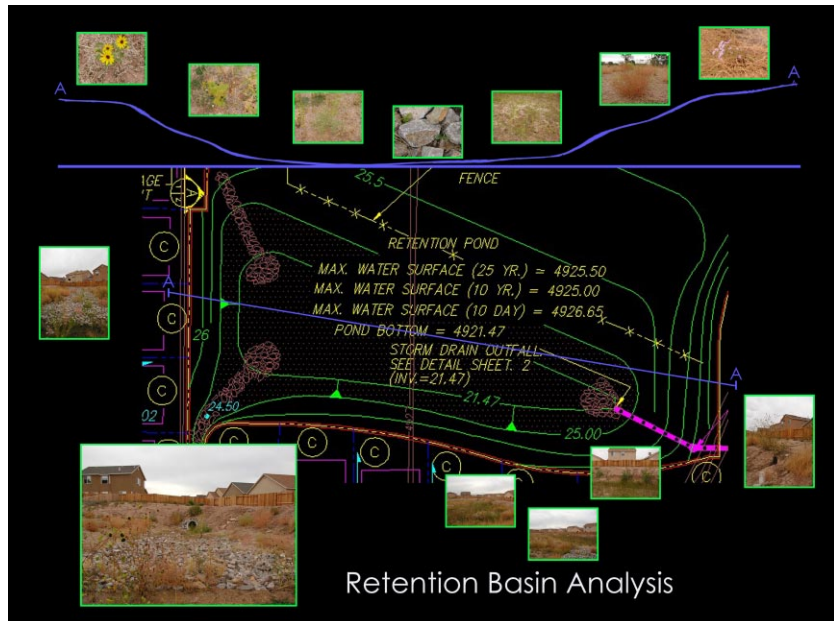
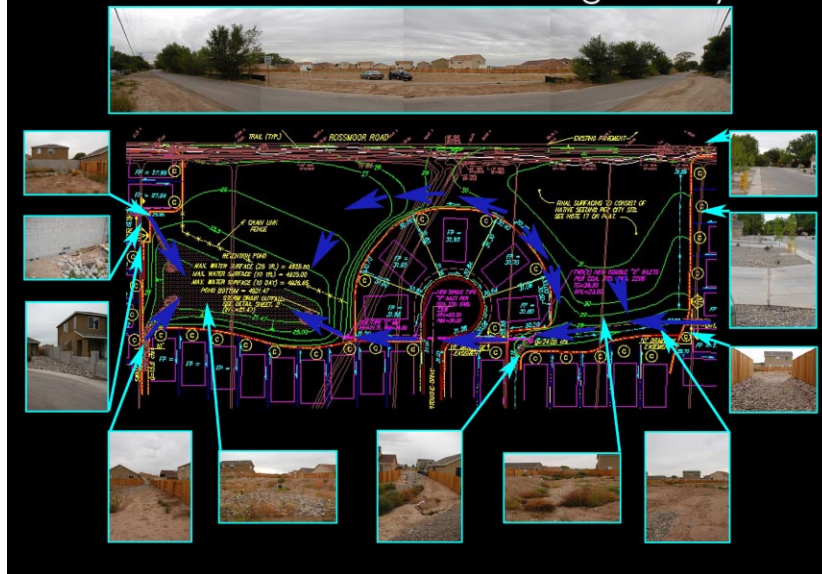
Income

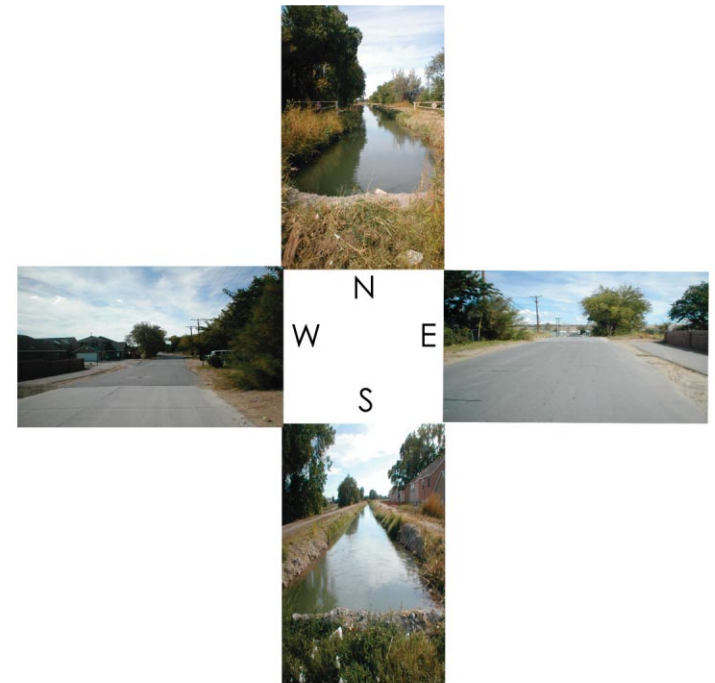
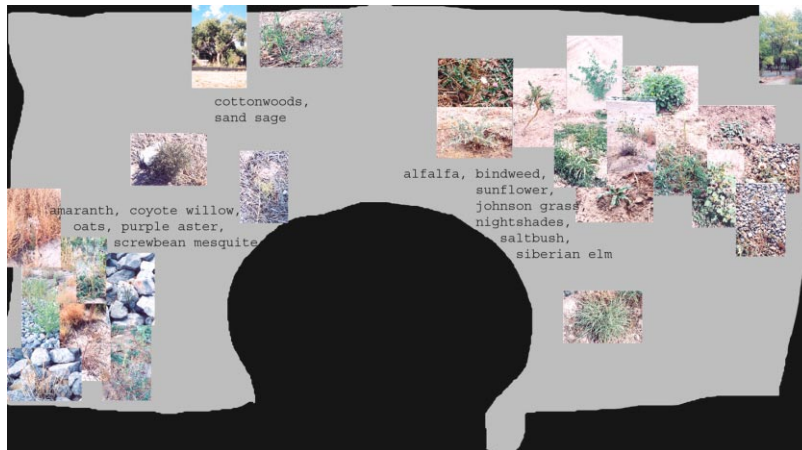
- 0 - 20000
- 20001 - 30000
- 30001 - 40000
- 40001 - 97738
- Site



Taking Measure

Edward L. Romero Park Drainage Analysis





loss of its longstanding agricultural status?

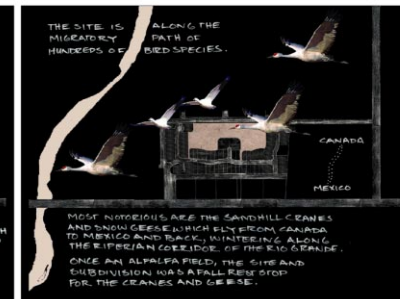
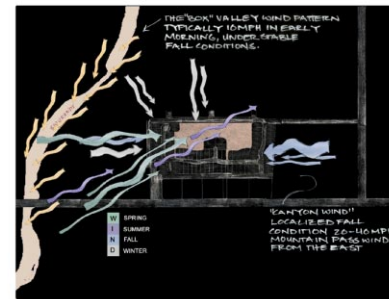


when asphalt shingles replace alfalfa plants...
when human habitats close wildlife corridors...

With all things considered, what is the **cost** of a
our American dream?

1000

The measure is incalculable.



How can this park be an affirmation of the CULTURAL IDENTITY of this community?

CULTURE

the customs, practices, languages, values and world views that define social groups such as those based on ethnicity, region, or common interests.

COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

CULTURAL

feelings of affinity, mutual acceptance and belonging through shared beliefs and activities that propel members of a group to relate to each other

IDENTITY

SOCIAL VALUES

MULTICULTURAL



America

The gold of her promise
has never been mined

Her borders of justice
not clearly defined

Her crops of abundance
the fruit and the grain

Have not fed the hungry
nor eased that deep pain

Her proud declarations
are leaves on the wind

Her southern exposure
black death did befriend

Discover this country
dead centuries cry

Erect noble tablets
where none can decay

"She kills her bright future
and rapes for a sou

Then entraps her children
with legends untrue"

I beg you

Discover this country,
Maya Angelou

SOCIAL VALUES

HISPANIC

Family Unit Very Important
Warm, Expressive
Respect- elders, formal
Work Ethic "time is life"
Roles men/women
Proud People
Dignity
Machismo(positive,negative)
Kissing Greetings
Closer Physical Distance

AMERICAN

Personal Freedom
Open, Friendly
Challenge Authority
Work Ethic "time is money"
Innovative
Spontaneous
Personal Achievement
Egalitarian, Experimental
Handshake
Space

LANGUAGE

FOOD

MUSIC

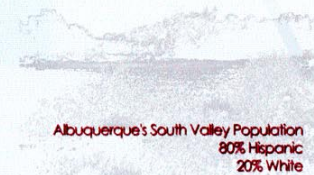
RELIGION

HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE

Rio Grande River
Large Tracts Land
Cottonwood Trees
Livestock
Mobile Homes
Tractors

Farming
Alfalfa Fields
Rural Setting
Acequias
Dogs Barking
Trucks

SOUTH VALLEY



Albuquerque's South Valley Population
80% Hispanic
20% White

Three Schemes

Scheme 1: Roots Revealed

Lisa Barva
Mitzi Messick
Yvette Tovar

Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park is a neutral zone that absorbs the shock felt by a more established, rural neighborhood when a new, 76-lot housing development replaces an alfalfa field. This park is between two communities and carries the potential of creating community.

In the case of the Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park, it is our primary intention to bring people together in a place that is particularly mindful of the site's agricultural history, while also respecting expectations of potential users representing different age groups, different activity levels, and cultural backgrounds.

Roots are what we all have in common. All cultures eat from the bounty the earth's soil provides. All cultures rely on family ties to ground and support them. All cultures have ideas about essential, core elements within the broader scope of society. Roots beneath the surface grow and reach to capture the necessary nutrients to sustain the plant above. May Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park be a place that creates a strong, resilient network that nourishes and sustains our human community.

Scheme2: Earth Works

Suze Green
Ethan Kane

A VISIONARY STATEMENT

He leapt from the fence and saw that all nature was a garden.

Horace Walpole

We conceive of Ambassador Romero Park as an evolving, dynamic space.

Our primary role is to provide a topographic *armature* upon which plant communities and human interactions thrive by design.

The initial step of regarding the site and stabilizing areas of runoff will support a park of the future in which different ideas of time will be allowed to emerge as the surrounding community changes. A *Phasing Program* (of park elements) will create opportunities for community involvement in the metamorphosis of the space.

Our vision for the park is not a design frozen in time, but one that continually evolves and adapts to suit the needs of the individuals who choose to experience it.

Scheme 3: Fusion Park

Katya Crawford
Jay Rice

Context

Once an alfalfa field, the park site is situated between the older neighborhood of Poco Loco and the newer subdivision of Westbrook Commons. This site is an awkward and disturbed piece of land. The future park must compensate for the lack of foresight of the developer, act as an amenity for the new homeowners of Westbrook Commons, and be a community builder between the two neighborhoods.

The design process began with an examination of the dominant types of development in the South Valley. Three major types were identified: agriculture, industry, and the natural river system. Responding to the twenty-first century, the design embodies a fusion of abstracted elements inherent to these prevalent land types.

Scheme 1

ROOTS REVEALED ● Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park

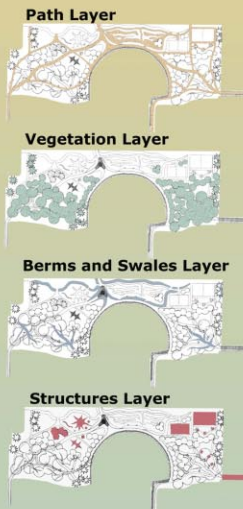
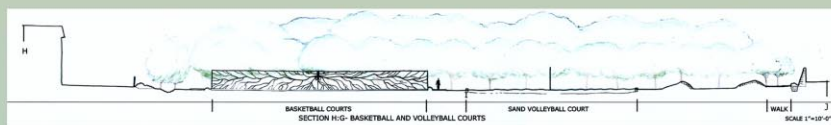
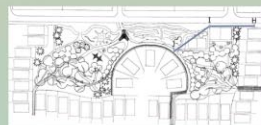
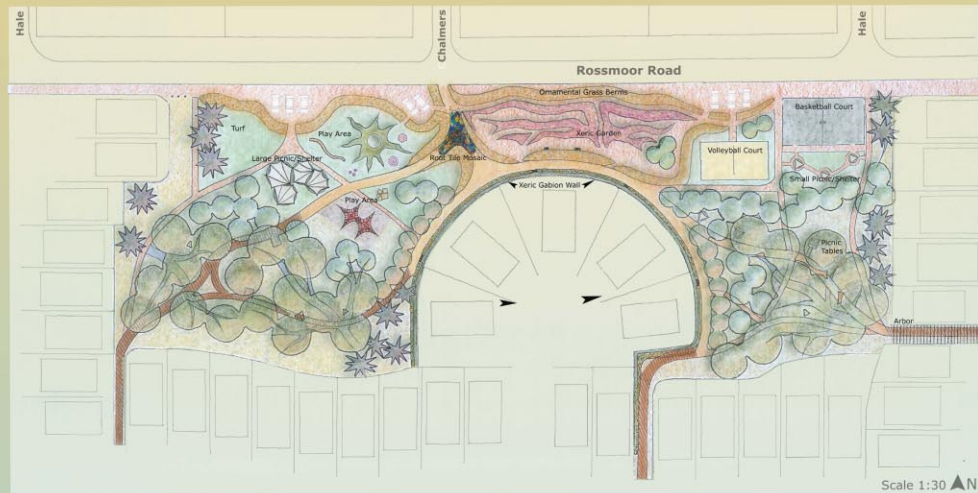
Root (rōōt, rōōt)
 n. 1. A base or support.
 2. The essential part, core.
 v. 1. To implant or become firmly established by or as if by roots.

Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park is located in a buffer zone—the area that absorbs the shock felt by a more established, rural neighborhood when a new, 76-lot housing development replaces an alfalfa field. The park is the neutral zone that lies between the two and carries the potential of creating community.

The park is named after a man who served our country as a diplomat. Diplomats are skillful when dealing with others, they say or do the most fitting thing. Ideally, it is the same with designers. What is the most fitting thing for designers to do when creating a public space?

In the case of the Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park, it was our primary intention to bring people together in a place that is particularly mindful of the site's agricultural history, while also respecting expectations of potential users representing different age groups, different activity levels, and cultural backgrounds.

Roots are what we all have in common. All cultures eat from the bounty the earth's soil provides. All cultures rely on family ties to ground and support them. All cultures have ideas about essential, core elements within the broader scope of society. Roots beneath the surface grow and reach to capture the necessary nutrients to sustain the plant above. May Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park be a place that creates a strong, resilient network that nourishes and sustains our human community.



ROOTS REVEALED



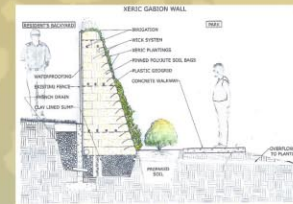
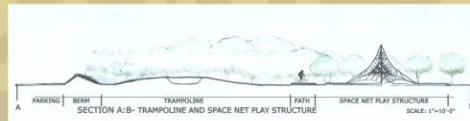
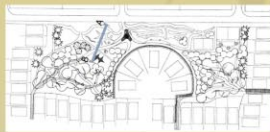
Xeric Gabion Wall hugs cul-de-sac perimeter to retain and stabilize soil.



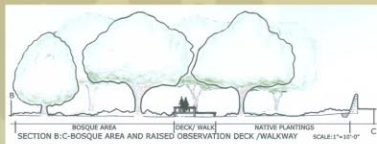
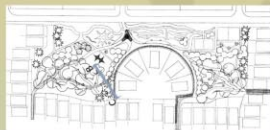
Arbor provides pedestrian access to park for Westbrook residents while maintaining privacy for adjacent homeowners.



Playground climbing structure echoes underground root network and provides challenges appropriate for children of varying age groups.

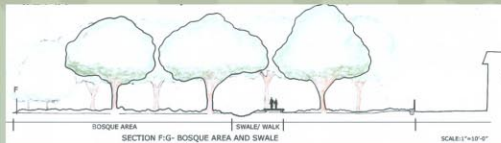
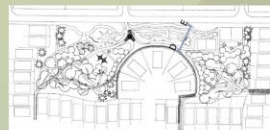


Sump beneath fence and gabion wall retains runoff and wick system irrigates wall plantings.



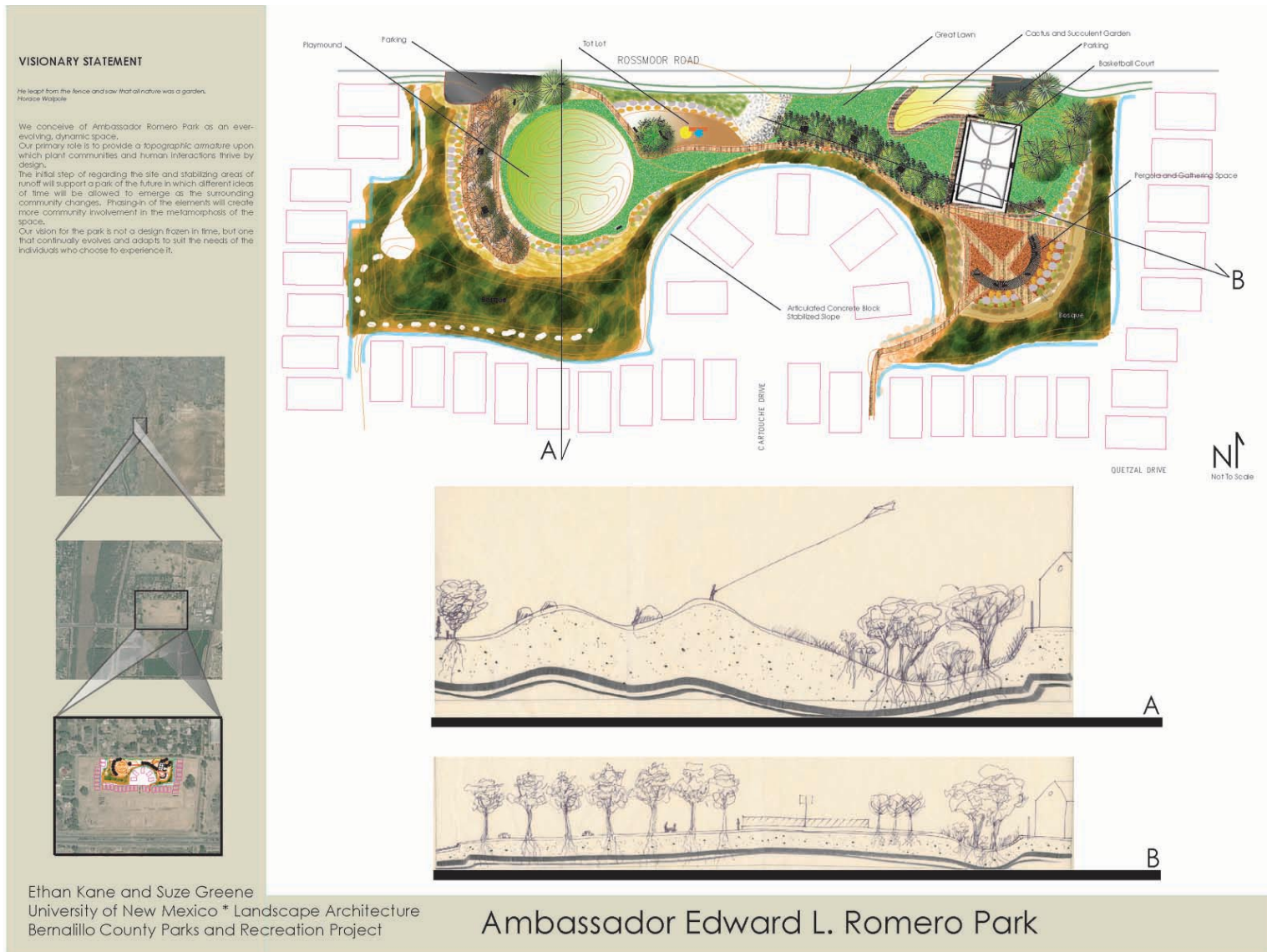
Model Detail of Park Entrance

Entrance is positioned across from Chalmers Road to link the park with the older, established neighborhood. The path features a tile mosaic inspired by a root cross section. Berms define the edges creating a boundary along Rossmoor Road and defining the entrance area. The gentle sloping of this permeable edge allows visual access along the road. The berms are rooted in the agricultural history of the site and are an abstraction of roots and agricultural rows. The tile mosaic represents the nexus of the root from which the paths are born and is the welcome mat to the park.



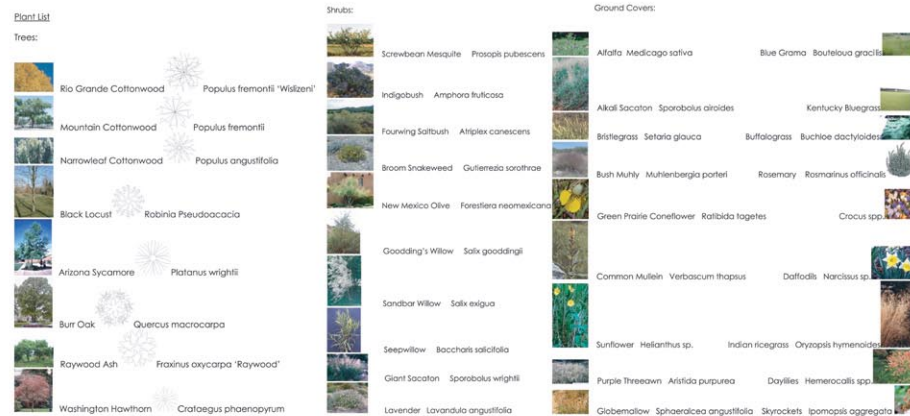
Team Members: Yvette Tovar, Mitzi Messick, Lisa Barva

Scheme 2



EARTHWORK

Ambassador Edward L. Romero Park



PHASING

Phasing of the park project is seen as a way to bolster community support and is in keeping with the idea of an ever-evolving space. As the design becomes realized, the elements within the three phases listed here may change, reflecting the priorities of park users.

PHASE 1:

PHASE 1:
In this phase, the topographic armature is set in place. The perimeter of the park is stabilized, maximizing runoff efficiency and minimizing erosion damage. Initial "bosque" planting takes place in the swale along the southern edge of the park; this area is then fenced and left to grow on its own, being maintained twice a year.

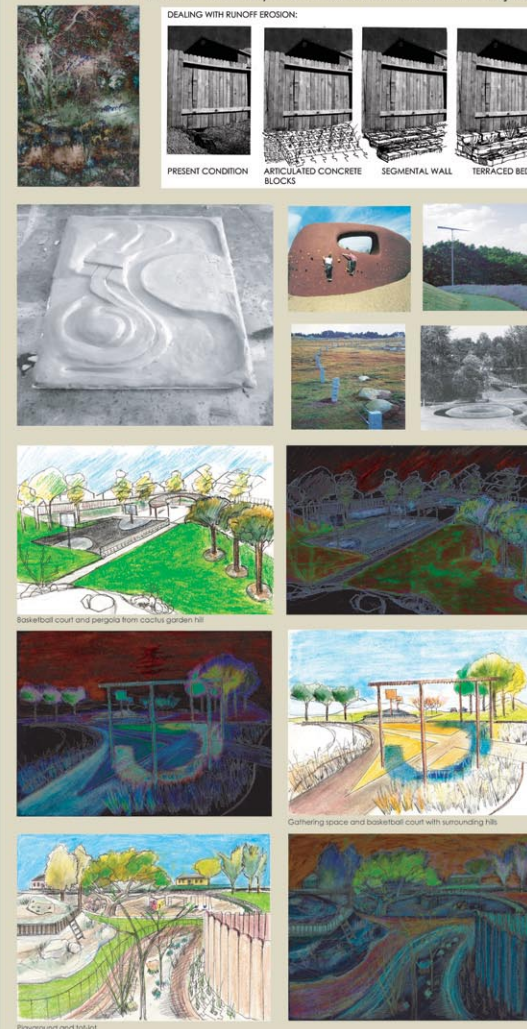
PHASE 2:

PHASE 2:
During this phase parking, irrigation systems, pathways, walls, terracing, and other hardscape features are set in place. As the "bosque" continues to grow up, educational signage is put up, informing park-goers of biological processes happening there. The basketball court and tot lot are constructed.

PHASE 3:

PHASE 3:
As the "bosque" becomes a settled community, the fence that separated it from the rest of the park is removed. A pergola shade structure is set in place in the commons area, and picnic tables, benches, and other park amenities appear. By now, shade trees will have become established. Shrubs and ground covers abound. Lighting is implemented. A theme playground relating to adventure and the bosque is constructed. Site specific public art happens.

Ethan Kane and Suze Greene
University of New Mexico * Landscape Architecture
Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Project



Team Members: Ethan Kane, Suze Greene

Scheme 3

AMBASSADOR EDWARD L. ROMERO PARK South Valley, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Katya Crawford and Jay Rice

context

Once an alfalfa field, the park site is situated between the older neighborhood of Peco Loco (developed in the forties), and the newer subdivision of Westbrook Commons (developed this past summer). Donated by the developer in honor of Ambassador Edward L. Romero to Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation (hence the name for the park), the site is an awkward and disturbed piece of land. The future park must compensate for the lack of foresight of the developer, act as an amenity for the recent homeowners of Westbrook Commons, and be a community builder between the two neighborhoods.

The site is a quarter of a mile east of the Rio Grande, and sits just west of Rio Bravo Boulevard and Second Street. A complex, unique and naturally beautiful area of Albuquerque, the South Valley has a rich agricultural and industrial history.

The design process began with an examination of the dominant types of development in the South Valley. Three major types were identified: agriculture, industry, and the natural river system. Responding to the twenty-first century, the design embodies a fusion of abstracted elements inherent these prevalent land types.

urban parking plaza

Inspired by agricultural fields, the parking design makes a direct and playful jab at 'progress' by overlaying modern paving material and erecting a wall that references a city skyline.

Acknowledging that parking lots can act as social hubs, the wall (varying in height) provides seating as well as opportunities for imaginative play.

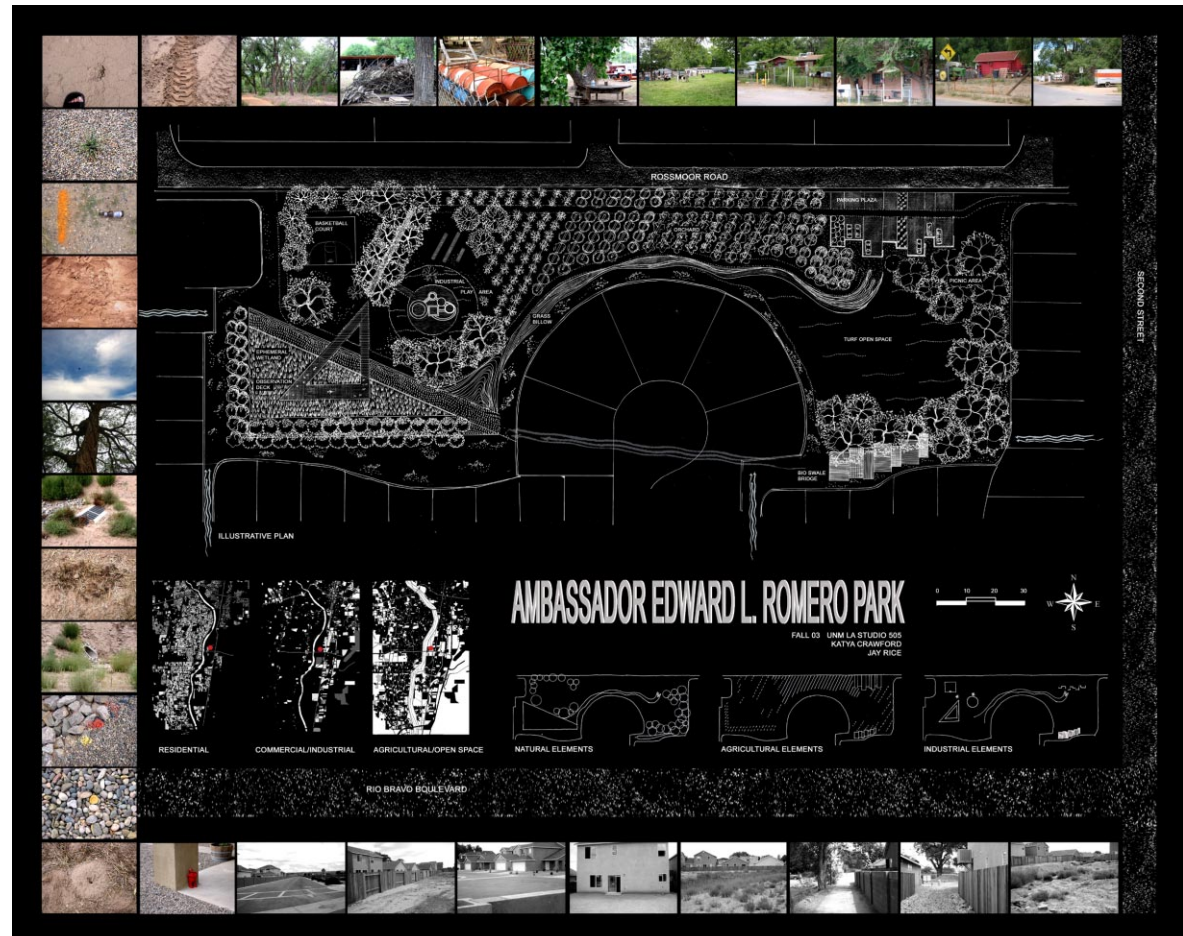
The parking spaces are constructed of 'Eco Stone,' a porous unit paver, which allows storm water to percolate into the water table.

There are two 'defiant gardens' that are situated within the parking plaza. These gardens, constructed of ornamental grasses planted in rows, bring the strong agricultural language of the South Valley into the parking plaza. With agricultural fields butting up to industrial sites, the tension between seemingly disparate programs is commonly found in the palimpsest of the South Valley.

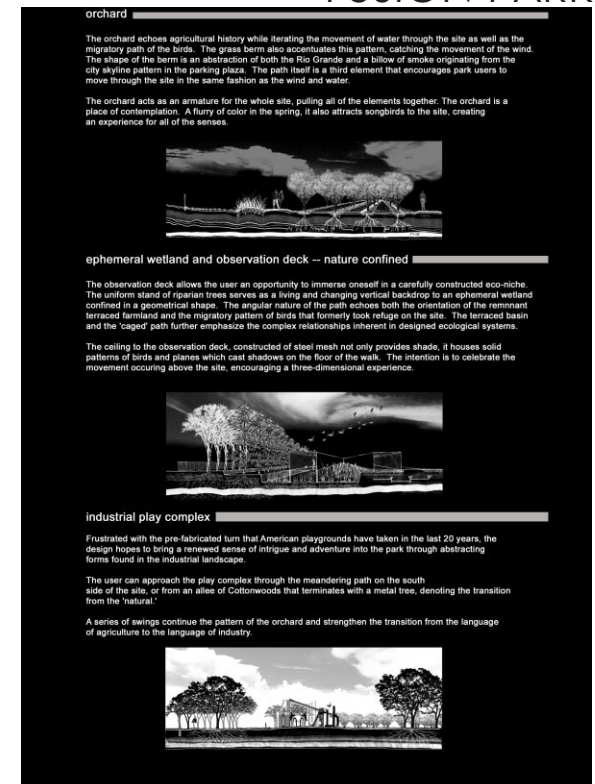


complex edge – bioswale and steel bridge

Several disparate forms merge at the drainage swale in the southeast corner of the park. Elements of the traditional picturesque park about a functional bioswale. Perforated steel slabs provide access over the swale to the adjoining lots while mirroring the agricultural and industrial patterns of the parking plaza. Riparian grasses penetrate the bridge structure, extending the conventional turf in a novel way. The intersection of the natural, historic and modern cultural elements creates a complex, engaging open space.



FUSION PARK



Team Members: Katya Crawford, Jay Rice

Final Comments

LA 505 added tremendous value to this project by exploring design options and reaching out to the community. BCPR is pleased with the community process the students followed and the depth and breadth of their research and investigations that led to the "Roots Revealed", "Earthwork", and "Fusion Park" designs. Each design has strengths and merits that will be incorporated into the final design as appropriate.

The context of the area, the history of the new subdivision relative to the established community, BCPR needs as the client, and their compressed time frame to accomplish the work were all challenges that LA 505 handled exceptionally well. Their respect for the community and the future park users was evident from beginning to end and is clearly reflected in the preceeding pages.

It was a refreshing experience for BCPR to be involved in a project where billable hours and contractual issues did not demand attention, and where care and time was taken to fully research, explore, critique, and revise design options. Knowledgeable experts from the region were consulted and visited the site. Emerging trends and cutting-edge design elsewhere in the world were referenced for ideas and inspiration.

Poetry was incorporated into the studio work as a basis for reinforcing aesthetics and placing humans within cultural landscapes and the built environment. The students' adroit use of digital technology added a powerful dimension to this project that is effectively conveyed in their compelling, clear, attractive, and well conceived graphic materials.

Their command of landscape architecture and environmental design is growing and BCPR is proud to have been associated with this work. All members of LA 505 have bright futures in their chosen field; future park and environmental design will benefit from their talents.

**Clay Campbell,
Senior Park Planner**

This final studio provided students with real-world experience that challenged all of them--as individuals--to participate in a process that was dynamic and complex. It also offered them the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with a variety of individuals in the community, county and city departments, and local professionals.

The final studio in a Masters of Landscape Architecture curriculum should challenge students at many levels, simultaneously. This group of students proved their abilities--the skills they have gained while in this graduate program--as designers, community members, and team players.

This report is the product of many peoples' efforts. I am proud of the park designs the students created, and I am proud their willingness to be a part of this community endeavor.

Thank you to the Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department for partnering with the School of Architecture and Planning, Landscape Architecture Program: I appreciate your desire to contribute to the education of landscape architecture students (by providing us with this project), as well as for your attentiveness during the semester (the many hours and energy spent attending studios, public meetings, gathering materials, etc.) , and finally--for your patience and support throughout this process.

**Joni M. Palmer,
Visiting Assistant Professor**

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Appendices

CD 1: Construction Documents AutoCAD files..... This CD only available to P & R Dept.

CD 2: Community Process PDF's and JPEG's
Sign-In Sheets
Images from all events
Community Meeting worksheets

Schemes: images and maps..... PDF's and JPEG's
Scheme 1
Scheme 2
Scheme 3

CD Instructions

Because of the size of the files, and for efficient organizational purposes, there are 2CD's that hold all of the files that compose this report. Each CD is composed of discrete parts of this report. The facing page -- APPENDICES -- lists the items each CD contains.

In addition, because of the size of the files and the desire to fit all files onto 2 CD's, the files are compressed using WinZip. If you do not have a copy of **WinZip**, you can download Win Zip: www.winzip.com

We have tried, for the most part to save files in a universal format—**pdf**'s. If you do not have a copy of adobe acrobat reader, you can download adobe reader: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

Some files are saved as **JPEG**'s -- which you can open with Adobe Photoshop or a Photo Editor.

Construction Documents are saved in **AutoCAD**, the program the students used to create the documents.